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over, a gentleman of wealth and prestige to the Alorese, and he was a Moslem. It was evident that the villagers had an eye for litigation where their women were concerned, and that was a source of trouble it seemed wise to avoid. To Ali I entrusted all the care of establishing a household in an island unfamiliar and remote to us both. This duty he discharged with such skill, tact, and devotion that I have never lived so carefree a domestic existence in areas replete with what pass for civilized conveniences. To Ali was entrusted also the training of five Alorese boys, one from each of the five villages in the valley where I worked. Five boys may seem an excessive staff, but in this way no one of them had too much unaccustomed work, and each was free to play a normal part in village affairs, and I had the inestimable advantage of an informant and host in each community. Also, as I learned later, the impartial distribution of cash wages stood me in good stead.

The choice of the village in which I was to work involved long sessions with the radjah of Alor and several horseback trips into the interior. When I chose Atimelang, the radjah was obviously reluctant. He feared and distrusted these strange mountaineers who had been embroiled in the murder of his uncle, the former radjah, some twenty years before. His "kapitan," however, was willing to vouch for my safety, and two hours after the decision was reached, I had purchased the corn crop growing on the land where my house was to be built overlooking the dance place. The floor plan of the kind of house I had designed in terms of local building ability was staked out—a verandah, a living room, two bedrooms, and a store room. To one side was to be the kitchen and bath house. From the hill rising sharply back of the village, water was to be brought in a bamboo "aqueduct" from a spring which was reported to flow all year. I was assured that in two weeks the miracle would be wrought. When the Dutch controleur returned at the end of two weeks with me and the twenty-eight carriers, the house was not completed; it had barely been started. The controleur had to go back but I stayed on in the government rest shack to see the job through. The next two weeks of exhilery improved my Malay and gave me a start at the local language.

This language had not been studied before and, of course, had no written form. It seemed useful to give it some name, so I called it Abui, which is the word the local people used to designate themselves as opposed to the coastal people. From the beginning vocabularies and texts were taken down phonetically, and by the time that autobiographical material was recorded a year later, I was able to translate directly

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● [126] into English as the informants gave their life histories, although I never felt sufficiently secure in the language to dispense with the translation into Malay which Fanam, the interpreter, furnished. Myths and other tales were recorded in Abui and given interlinear translations in English which I later checked with Fanam in Malay. Certainly the linguistic landscape were green and only innocent ears reduced the possibilities of green errors.

[13] With the completion of the house, the village assisted me in discharging the obligations of a house-building feast. The slaughter of two pigs and a goat clearly indicated that this was a house deserving a lineage name. At the all-night dance preceding the feast, the chief, after considerable deliberation with me, decided Hamerika was suitable. Here a peculiar linguistic feature entered. When I was asked the name of my lineage, I said that I came from America. In Abui this name means "your" Merica and became a gracious gesture of hospitality to the chief. He then called the house "her" Merica (Hamerica). My nation and their lineage concepts were all satisfactorily blended, unfortunately through sheer misunderstanding.

A daily "clinic" served further to acquaint me with the people and, more importantly, to acquaint the people with me. My first patient was Rikpeh the Rat. By good luck two old ulcers healed rapidly under daily treatment and thereafter we exchanged the courtesies of two medical specialists. He sent me people with wounds, infections, fevers, and intestinal ailments. I sent him people who needed charms or cures for supernatural ills. Daily I bathed infections, dispensed quinine or castor oil or aspirin, and gradually even the women and children were sufficiently used to my touch to forgive me the size of my body, the whiteness of my skin, and the blue eyes, which looked so frighteningly blind to them. That my nose was long and sharp was, however, to the very end of my stay, a never-ending source of merriment. That I took no offense at their amusement they discovered only later and to the considerable relief of the older persons concerned with the proprieties.

[14] Gradually life assumed a familiar and intimate character, as it will in any village the world over. The Dutch on the coast rarely entered my mind, except twice a month when one of the boys went to meet the mail boat and make small purchases at the Chinese store. The people of Atimelang no longer found me their chief source of entertainment, and, although I could never wander about unnoticed, at least I was ignored when engrossing matters were afoot. My awkwardness in handling a betel quid was always a chance for diversion. The chief-

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quence of thought. The subject was allowed to proceed as long as he chose, and when he paused the interpreter repeated what had been said, while I completed the written record. In the printed autobiographies the original order of narration has been kept. Except for the deletion of irrelevant and confusing place and personal names, the inclusion of a few parenthetical comments for purposes of clarification, and some minor changes in punctuation and the like, the records are in the form in which they were set down in Alor. Although they may sometimes be difficult to read in this fashion, they seem more valuable and genuine pictures of the personalities. The reader will find that, except in the case of Maleiaka, the first day's interview comes very close to epitomizing the individual's attitudes and preoccupations.

The autobiographies are rich in ethnographic detail despite the fact that informants were kept rather persistently to their own experiences and reactions. In a few cases ethnographic descriptions of an impersonal nature have been omitted. Even so, the autobiographies serve better than any other device to bring alive and make specific the generalizations and speculations in Part 2.

Chapter 10

Mangma the Genealogist

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

November 24, 1938

[What was the first thing he could remember?] When I was still very small and couldn't yet talk clearly, I remember there was a hungry period. Mother and father went to the woods and took the roots of wild bananas and brought them home to eat. Mother was pounding them up in a mortar, and a little bit fell over the edge. I grabbed it up and ate it, saying, "This is my tuber [referring to an esteemed sort, grown locally]."

When I was still small I was sitting on a mortar. It was the time that corn was ripening. My mother did not cook me ripe corn but was preparing unripe cassava. I asked her for my *ako*. [*Ako* is baby talk for *barako*, a pierced tuber.] Just then there was an earthquake. I fell off the mortar to the ground. Everything rocked and shook. Cracks opened in the earth. Our house fell down. A heavy beam dropped across the mor-

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Chapter 13

Fantan the Interpreter

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The beginning of this autobiography was collected in the usual manner. It was the first of the eight secured, and I suggested that Fantan tell me his life story so that he could understand the kind of information I hoped to get. The last part is a combination of Fantan's own casual accounts of his daily affairs and my observations on the difficulties he encountered. This latter part is written in the third person instead of the first and consists partly of casual jottings on Fantan's behavior and attitudes made in connection with other topics.

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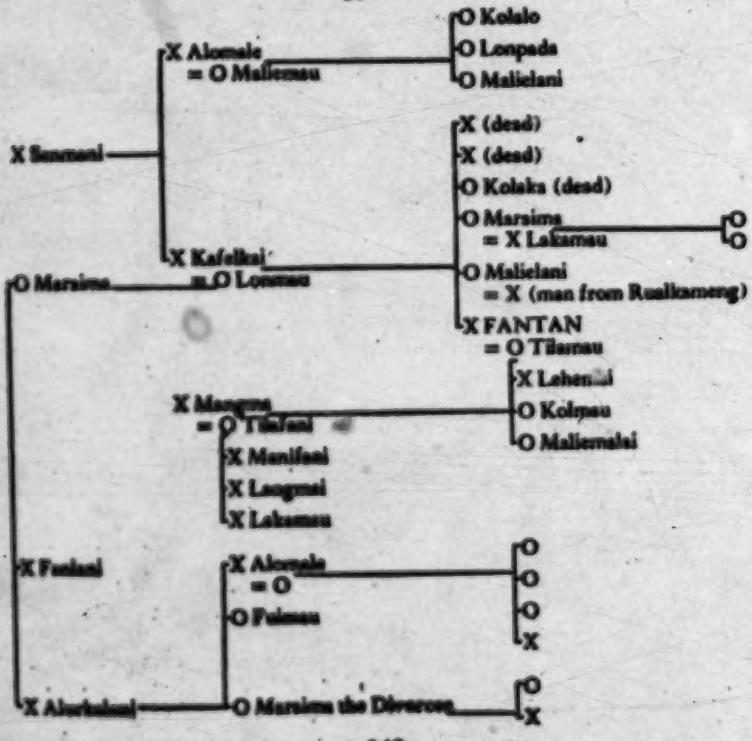
Genealogy of Fantan



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159 played cards and I lost half a rupiah, so I had only two left. [The informant's account seemed full of internal contradictions.]

[It was evident at this point that the informant was blocking in his autobiography. I dropped the daily sessions for three days. During that time Fantan was engaged in a vigorous quarrel with his wife, Tilamau. [126] On the fourth day he came early in the morning and told me the following story, which I have recast into the third person and in which I have inserted such observations as I was able to make.]

November 22, 1938

[125] About a month ago Fantan's wife gambled and lost her dance necklace and anklets. Fantan said he gave her money to try to win them back, but she only lost that too. He was angry, and in telling me about it he put his anger on the moral basis that women should not play cards though it was all right for men. "Young women can play cards because they don't have to work and remember their families, but married women have to work. Besides, women just go on and on. They gamble [292 away all they have, even their shawls. If they don't have shawls to wear 84] during their menstrual periods it isn't nice."

On Friday (November 18) Fantan was wandering about and joined in a game in a remote garden house where some unmarried girls were gambling. One of the girls, Fungata, had just lost most of her anklets and her necklace. She had only two anklets left. Fantan said if she would give him her two remaining anklets he would win the others back for her. He lost the two anklets and then said (although he admitted to me that he was lying) that he had twenty-five cents in his pocket and would stake fifteen cents of that against the lost articles. He had a winning streak and won back all that the girl had lost. Instead of keeping them, as he was entitled to do, he returned them to her.

Early Sunday morning (November 20) while he was away two of the girls present at the gambling told his wife about the episode. When he returned from an early market where he had been with me, his wife berated him for returning the jewelry to Fungata when she herself had none, and for not winning hers back for her. She asked if Fungata were his sister or maybe his wife and implied that he had had intercourse with her. She boxed his ears, and he picked up a rattan switch and hit her twice across the thigh. She took her field knife and hit his shoulder with the flat of the blade. He was terrorized and told me he had a large wound. This was patently untrue; he had not even a scratch. When I pointed this out he said, "Well, I might have had a large wound."